

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

SH 141 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

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CONTACT: BRENT BAHLER
(202) 224-6521

DOLE PROPOSES NATIONAL AG POLICY COMMISSION;
SENATE PANEL MAKES IT PART OF NEW FARM BILL

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kansas), calling for "agricultural statesmanship - not politics as usual", today proposed the establishment of a new National Commission on Agricultural Policy. The Senate ag committee swiftly moved to make Dole's proposal part of the new farm bill by a 17-0 vote.

The commission, said Dole, would have 12 months to evaluate the nation's agricultural policies and practices and to report recommendations to the president and Congress. Subsequent evaluations, and reports, would be made each year.

Dole said the commission would provide "an impartial and bipartisan forum to evaluate and make recommendations for improvements in the way U.S. agricultural policies, programs and practices are developed and implemented."

"As such, the National Commission on Agricultural Policy" would have no direct decision-making authority, but would serve as a sounding board for the Administration and for the Congress" on farm issues, Dole said.

Dole's proposal calls for 19 persons to serve on the commission, of which 15 members would be nominated by state governors and appointed by the president. The remaining four members would consist of ranking members of the House and Senate agriculture committees or their designates.

Commission members must represent individuals or industries "directly affected by agricultural policies" according to Dole. If they do not, the president would be permitted to substitute up to three members in order to provide balance.

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"One of the basic reasons for the establishment of this commission is the well-recognized fact that our national policy development process for agricultural issues is not working very well. We are also aware of the crisis conditions that seem to have become an almost permanent feature across the landscape of rural America. These difficult times call for agricultural statesmanship - not politics as usual," Dole said.

"I share the suspicions of other members of the Senate about the value and purpose of setting up new commissions. Nonetheless, I am convinced that we need to provide for some continuity in assessing and proposing new solutions to our agricultural problems, which will not end with the enactment of the 1985 farm bill later this year. We will need to have constant feedback and input at the grassroots level, and we must remain flexible in responding to these constituencies," concluded Dole.

Commission members would serve without pay, but would be provided staff and support services as required. The term of their service is limited to four years, after which time the commission would expire under Dole's proposal.

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